

Christine Joyce

9/27 (6)

From: John Murray
Sent: Wednesday, September 01, 2004 12:47 PM
To: Christine Joyce
Subject: FW: Ann Chang, Art Gagne and Nancy Tavernier CWRMP Agenda Item

Please read Dore's note at the end and make it so.

John

From: Dore' Hunter
Sent: Wednesday, September 01, 2004 10:58 AM
To: Manager Department
Cc: Ann Chang; Art Gagne'; Nancy Tavernier
Subject: Ann Chang, Art Gagne and Nancy Tavernier CWRMP Agenda Item

In a message dated 09/01/2004 10:41:07 AM Eastern Daylight Time, ntavern@comcast.net writes:

The CAC was formed in 2002 after a Town Meeting vote to fund the CWRMP for \$500,000. At that time the retiring members of the Sewer Action Committee were asked if they wanted to join the CAC. At least six members agreed to serve. At the same time all the relevant town boards and committees were asked to appoint a member. There were newspaper articles requesting members from the Town at large. There were efforts to get specific areas of the Town covered by members as well as people who were in the current sewer district. At our first meeting there were 16 people present and all were assured that there would be no more than four meetings a year.

Perhaps the long introductory preparation for CWRMP and the elongated period between meetings during Phase I caused some earlier participants to lose interest or for some other reason became non-participants. Whatever the cause, we suggest that if additional and broader membership is now desirable that the CAC recommend to the BOS that it undertake a new recruitment program to obtain new members or contact former participants to rejoin the CAC to ensure a broad cross section of opinion. We further recommend that the total membership of the CAC be held to a reasonable number, such as twenty to twenty-five, for obvious reasons of efficiency and effectiveness. [Emphasis added]

Don/John,

Please insert an item into the BOS Agenda, if not for the 9/13 meeting then for the following meeting, concerning the membership and active participation of an adequate number of citizens in the activities of the Citizen Advisory Committee mentioned in the email copied in part above. Invitations to attend should be extended to all staff and citizens actively involved in the CWRMP process.

Regards,
Dore' Hunter
Temporarily at Silver Bay, NY tel: 518-543-6953
Email: DoreHunter@aol.com

9/24/2004

Christine Joyce

From: Nancy Tavernier
Sent: Wednesday, September 01, 2004 9:34 AM
To: Brent Reagor; Walter Foster (office); Ann Chang; Art Gagne'; Bill McInnis; Eric Hilfer; Helen Priola; Helen Probst; James Shope; Jane Ceraso; Joan Lastovica; Kathleen Doran Boyle; Lauren Rosenzweig; Len Rappoli; Pat Cummings; Tony Capobianco; Trey Shupert; Stacy Rogers (home); Carol Holley; MSMichelman@cs.com; Bob Johnson; Doug Halley; Bob Rafferty; Bob Rafferty; Nancy Tavernier
Cc: Board of Selectmen
Subject: CAC statement from Ann Chang, Art Gagne and Nancy Tavernier

TO: Citizens' Advisory Committee, CWRMP
FROM: 3 Members of CAC:
Ann Chang <ann.chang@verizon.net>,
Art Gagne <waglsgrcn.com>,
Nancy Tavernier <ntavern@comcast.net>
SUBJECT: Thoughts on the CWRMP
DATE: September 1, 2004

As former long time Sewer Action Committee members and current Citizens' Advisory Committee members, we would like to put forth a statement about our collective thinking on the direction we think the CWRMP should take. These comments are consistent with the points that we make at every CAC meeting. We think it might be helpful if we put them in writing to explain our perspective on Acton's ongoing wastewater disposal problems in preparation for the next CAC meeting on September 16.

These are our opinions on some of the broader issues relating to the Comprehensive Wastewater Resources Management Plan (CWRMP) currently underway in Acton. Some of us have been working on sewer issues since the mid-1980's and have taken an active role in the political and technical challenge of bringing the first municipal sewer system to the Town of Acton, 50 years after it was first identified as a critical need.

We support the efforts to add properties to the current Sewer District because, when it was designed, the treatment plant, the pump stations, and the collection systems were built for an increased capacity knowing that the need for expansion was great. Having the capability of adding more treatment units, at some point in the future, would increase the capacity to handle an expanded sewer district at a lesser overall cost. The costs to provide expansion capability are being paid for by the Acton tax payers as part of the public share of the project cost, rather than solely through the assessments to the users. The final Middle Fort Pond District was reduced from the original design because the discharge area was restricted by the DEP which in turn reduced the volume of sewage that could be treated. We think using this existing infrastructure for future expansion is a sound economic move and one that the taxpayers understood and supported.

The original plant was designed to treat approximately 500K gallons per day (gpd) of wastewater for discharge to a groundwater discharge system also located on Adams Street, open sand beds. This was the design and construction objective. However, during the planning process, DEP approved a limit of only 250K gpd due to concerns of the proximity to the Assabet River.

The current flow of wastewater into the treatment plant is 100K gpd. Therefore, our present Adams Street treatment facility, without any new expansion construction, is physically capable of handling up to 150K more gpd. This includes approximately 60K gpd of unconnected properties within the current Sewer District. An enlarged treatment plant on Adams Street with two additional treatment units would expand the treatment capacity to 1.2+ million gpd. This could easily handle West Acton Center at an estimated 68k gpd, and an expanded area around Indian Village

estimated at 300k gpd which includes the two elementary schools.

We think multiple discharge points should be investigated in the CWRMP. These points could initially be: increased disposal into the existing open sand beds on Adams St., the Zone 2 well field off High St., and surface water such as the Assabet River. All three of these locations in South Acton would allow the flow to pass through the treatment plant first before discharging the treated water. Acton has demonstrated that it can responsibly treat its effluent to a level far more advanced than any other treatment facility on the river.

In addition to expansion options for the Adams Street treatment plant there is another feasible sewer project that we support, East Acton Village. There are numerous reasons for an East Acton Village (EAV) project, several are listed below. In addition to those, is the willingness of EAV commercial property owners to aggressively pursue this option. A separate wastewater treatment plant could be constructed in the EAV area with a groundwater discharge system located on town-owned property on Wetherbee Street in East Acton. This system has the potential for handling a significant amount of East Acton area sewage.

The broader issues being addressed herein to support our position are:

- (1) Environment/health;
- (2) Economics;
- (3) Diverse housing opportunities; and
- (4) Esthetics.

Comments pertinent to each issue are listed below under each heading.

(1) Environment/Health

Throughout the 50 years of study of Acton's wastewater disposal problems, environmental impact has always been a prime consideration. There have been occasions when volunteers found E.coli bacteria in the storm drains in South Acton and raw sewage running in Kelley's Corner. These more egregious problems have now been corrected by sewerage those areas.

However, as the study has already shown, there are many parts of town with failing septic systems or soils that are not conducive to proper disposal. What is happening to the effluent being discharged into the ground from these systems? We think it is just as important to worry about the damage being done to the watershed by improper sub-surface disposal as it is to worry about what the impact would be to the Assabet River should Acton be allowed to discharge into it.

(2) Economics

When sewers were finally voted in 1998, some of the district owners were very upset at the projected betterment cost of \$15,000. We too were saddened to think that due to lack of political courage in the 80's, the Town now had to assume 100% of the cost of a sewer system when in 1985, it could have had 70% of the cost paid by the state and federal government. Those residents who are now sewerage are very lucky indeed, they have a permanent system for a fixed amount of money and they can pay it off over a 30 year period. Those residents with septic systems continue to pay for replacement, repair, and maintenance of their on-site systems at great financial impact in some cases. One home owner in Indian Village paid \$45,000 to replace her system just so she could sell her tiny 3 BR ranch house. The average replacement cost is now in the \$25,000+ range. None of these costs are allowed a 30 year pay back period. Sewers would be much cheaper to many if not most households in the town. Many of these failing systems are in older homes occupied by families on fixed incomes unable to absorb this major expenditure.

Another important economic consideration is Commercial Development. Acton's Master Plan Update calls for an increase in the

commercial and industrial tax base but without the required infrastructure in place like sewers, there is little development that can occur. Sewers would allow an increase in commercial and industrial development which would help take the burden off the residential taxpayers. Sewering the village areas such as West Acton and East Acton would allow the Village Plans to be implemented bringing new businesses, restaurants, even a Laundromat to the town.

(3) Diverse Housing Opportunities

While not the most popular topic in Acton, there is a severe need for more diversity in housing. A recently completed Housing Plan has identified the critical need for affordable as well as below market housing. Much of this could be provided through multi-family dwellings, accessory apartments, and residential units over commercial establishments in the village areas. Little new development is possible without access to sewers. The Growth Centers identified in the Master Plan will never become a reality without the infrastructure to help them grow the way the Town has envisioned it and voted.

(4) Esthetics

In and of itself, esthetics is not the most important reason to have sewers in lieu of septic systems but to those who have watched their properties be destroyed, those who have lost the use of major parts of their yards, and those who have to look at unsightly mounds, it is very important to them. A property that was formerly treed and landscaped has far more value than the property with the inevitable mound and perhaps also with an ugly retaining wall. The stripping of the lots and blasting of the ledge is very destructive to the environment and cannot help but devalue these properties.

The CAC was formed in 2002 after a Town Meeting vote to fund the CWRMP for \$500,000. At that time the retiring members of the Sewer Action Committee were asked if they wanted to join the CAC. At least six members agreed to serve. At the same time all the relevant town boards and committees were asked to appoint a member. There were newspaper articles requesting members from the Town at large. There were efforts to get specific areas of the Town covered by members as well as people who were in the current sewer district. At our first meeting there were 16 people present and all were assured that there would be no more than four meetings a year.

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We felt it was important to share our vision for the Town with members of the CAC, many of whom have not been directly involved in these issues in the past. We hope you find this helpful.